

# Christianity and

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## Biblical Faith and the Modern Mood

THE paragraphs that follow might be called post-Christmas reflections. They are inspired by Dr. Hough's editorial in our issue of December 13 on "Christmas and the Sacramental View of Life" as read against the background of Dr. Niebuhr's noteworthy article on "Christ vs. Socrates" in *The Saturday Review* of December 18. Probably most readers of this magazine would have no hesitancy in calling both these impressive bits of writing distinctively Christian, but surely no discriminating reader can fail to find them in marked contrast.

Dr. Hough finds the Christian hope in "the capacity of humanity to respond to God." He sees in the Incarnation a basis for faith in "a possible world-wide response to freedom and justice." When these are challenged "there is something in every man everywhere which throbs in eager or uneasy response." Through the centuries the men who have said "Yes" to Jesus "represented the true human line." Those who said "No" to Jesus have "repudiated their humanity." These declarations rest upon the faith that "flesh and the whole material world have upon them the signature of God." This is in the classical Christian tradition in that it affirms the doctrine of *Imago Dei*; yet it reflects the modern mood, affirming the essential goodness of man.

Dr. Niebuhr takes his departure from the Socratic view of man, which he holds to be characteristic of modern thought but in essential conflict with the Christian faith. The Socratic view is epitomized in the statement that "men would do the good if they only knew it." This identifies virtue with knowledge and exalts man's will at the expense of his understanding. But by the same token man may be regarded as prefectible through the increase of understanding. This outlook, says Dr. Niebuhr, rests upon a wholly false estimate of human nature. It makes love a "simple possibility of human existence." Modern man is preoccupied with his "dignity," but is oblivious of his "misery." The Christian faith insists that "the variance between man and God cannot be finally overcome by the virtue of man. All human virtue remains ambiguous to the end. It can be overcome only by a 'suffering' God who takes the sins of the world upon Himself."

That last sentence, of course, Dr. Hough will heartily accept. But there is a contrast in viewpoint here that is too seldom made the focus of discussion among us. It seems to center in the difference between continuity and discontinuity. The Christian faith, says Niebuhr, "deals with discontinuities rather than continuities." Indeed, there is an ineluctible irrationality about it. "It declares that the mystery of the divine is related to the mystery of creation and that creation is not identical with the causal sequences which science can chart. . . . This divine source and end of all things is a mystery beyond every rational intelligibility, though it is the capstone of every system of meaning."

This is indubitably in the classical Christian tradition, mood and all. St. Paul would stamp it as authentic. And by the same token it has an alien sound to modern ears—even to most Christian ears. To be sure, the modern mind is able to negotiate discontinuity in the sense that we find, both in personal experience and in human affairs generally, what a philosopher would call essential novelty-irruptions, so to speak, of the unpredictable which render any mechanical conception of process or of progress irrelevant. Even Mr. Einstein, whose naturalistic philosophic outlook is well known, has used the term revelation to characterize that aspect of reality which is created out of the stuff of life, not in the laboratory nor by rational process, but existentially—through being alive. But it is one thing to take account of discontinuities, which seem to defy formal logic, as aspects of what is on the whole an intelligible historical process; it is quite another thing to find the key to all truth and all reality in a catastrophic intrusion of an extra-historical force. And herein is the crux of the eschatological controversy into which we have been plunged.

To revert to our two writers, Dr. Niebuhr seems to be saying that the Incarnation is an event alien to history in the developmental sense. Dr. Hough finds it an authentic revelation of what history is about because it discloses what man, the maker of history, essentially is.

Now, it is farthest from the present writer's thought to precipitate an issue over which view is "right." On the contrary, the important point is that few of those who think with Dr. Niebuhr or those who think with Dr. Hough would find it possible or desirable to establish their own position by wholly excluding the other one. There are authentic elements in both. The problem is to relate them in some kind of manageable whole.

Outright contradictions are relatively easy to dispose of. Pushed far enough, one excludes the other. It is different with paradoxes—pairs of equally authentic realities which effectually resist any effort to relate them logically. Examples come readily to mind: freedom and law; love and justice; unity and diversity. Life at its deepest always wears this aspect of polarity. But in theological discourse paradoxes are always in danger of degenerating into contradictions and so to lose their meaning. An eminent Protestant layman, one of our ablest thinkers, said recently that the theologically unsophisticated layman needs help in distinguishing between mutually destructive contradictions, on the one hand, and "paradoxes that faith can encompass," on the other.

Theologians need not feel lonely in this situation, for the physical scientists are experiencing a similar difficulty. In studying the phenomena of light, for example, one can think in terms of particles or of waves, and each of these contrasting conceptual devices seems to be valid in a given context. But the scientist is content to use each for what it is worth, for the help it gives in apprehending reality. Perhaps the theologian must ultimately do likewise. Perhaps the search for ultimate religious truth is hindered rather than furthered by a too precise, either-or discrimination. The mysteries that are accessible to faith always, as Dr. Niebuhr says, transcend our logic; yet we never cease looking for the continuities that make life whole.

F. E. J.

### EDITORIAL NOTES

The situation in South Africa has worsened considerably with the elevation of Mr. Stydom to the position of Prime Minister in succession to the stubborn Dr. Malan. Common opinion regards the position of the new Prime Minister as so extreme that Malan appears to be a "moderate" in comparison. The new Prime Minister seeks to cut all ties with the British Empire and he frankly declares that the purpose of this move is to prevent the English speaking, and more moderate elements in the electorate, from becoming more "unified" with the Dutch citizens. In short the dominant party is not

only embarked upon a rigorous policy of segregation for the colored population but it also menaces the English speaking white population. There is evidently no end to the road for a policy of racial arrogance.

The consequence of these developments is that the Negroes of South Africa are in the most hopeless situation of any people in the world. Whether the resentments generated in this despair will lead to rebellious outbursts is not a question. The question is how long it will take to organize and mount such rebellions. Meanwhile the sale of gold and uranium by South Africa to our own nation gives the economy enough expansive health to postpone the rebellion into an unforeseeable future. Thus our own nation is implicated in the evils which most American citizens sincerely abhor.

As Christians we must have a particularly uneasy conscience about the monstrous situation which is developing in South Africa. For this great injustice has developed under the aegis of the Christian faith and avails itself of religious rationalizations of its racial prejudices. This is a sober reminder to Christians that the heresies of Nazism and communism are not the only causes of modern evil. Christian truth may be corrupted to be an instrument of evil.

Even a united Protestantism cannot discipline a member church for violation of Christian standards, however flagrant those violations may be. But ought there not be more concerted Christian protests, directed to the Dutch church in South Africa? There have been sub rosa delegations, but since these did not prove effective it would seem to be in order to inform the South African church that its conduct outrages the conscience of Christendom. Meanwhile, we had better beware lest some of our own churches lend themselves to the machinations of the states which are trying to circumvent the Supreme Court decision on segregation.

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The Policy Planning Staff of the State Department serves the nation well in the long range planning of foreign policy. It serves the nation almost equally well in training experts who help to educate the American people in fulfilling their unaccustomed responsibilities as leaders of the "free world." Three former members of the staff, in addition to Mr. George Kennan, its former head, have recently written excellent books on foreign policy: Charles B. Marshall's *Limits of Foreign Policy*, Louis J. Halle's *Civilization and Foreign Affairs* and Dorothy Fosdick's *Common Sense and World Affairs*. All of these books are excellent. It is not a coincidence that though their themes vary, they all seek to im-

press the nation with the limits of power, particularly military power, which even so great a nation as ours must observe. They all counsel patience amidst the tortuous processes of modern history. This is no coincidence because it is the advice of people who have held responsible positions in the conduct of foreign affairs and had the opportunity to detect the irrelevance of many proposed solutions for our problems, whether "idealistic" or "realistic." Miss Fosdick emphasizes that all of the main prob-

lems are "insoluble" in the absolute sense. We must, however, constantly find creative proximate solutions for them. The wisdom of these books may be drawn from the same responsibility and experience which has recently inspired the President of the nation to abjure previously advanced simple solutions and, to the relief of the whole free world, make some very definite decisions on the side of the patience and continued loyalty of our allies.

R. N.

## Christian Faith and Technical Assistance

MARGARET MEAD

THE revolution that has taken place in the last decade in our capacity to speed up technological change has confronted the Christian churches with an ethical dilemma of no small proportions. Throughout the last 2000 years Christianity and Judaism have provided the religious ethic which gave meaning and purpose to the attempts to ease the misery and lighten the darkness of the slave, the serf, the peasant, the heathen, and the aboriginal inhabitants of the newly discovered continents and islands beyond the sea. In the Judaic ethic to heal, to teach, and to feed the poor, were good deeds, benefitting the giver, in fact benefitting the giver to such a degree that the recipient was hardly expected to reciprocate with more than formal deference. Similarly, in traditional Christianity the care of the sick, teaching the ignorant, and feeding the hungry were all works through which individuals, acting in Christian compassion and charity, walked more closely in the ways of the Lord. This position was congruent with the state of technology during the first nineteen hundred years of the Christian Era. Christian compassion for suffering loomed far larger than Christian ability to cure disease; Christian charity might succor and help the needy, but the Great Famines and the Black Death raged across Europe; Christian piety and devotion might reproduce manuscripts by hand, but universal literacy waited upon printing, mass production of books, and the audio-visual methods of the twentieth century. From the kitchens of monasteries and colleges there might be distributions to the poor at Christmas of lumps of meats the "size of a child's head," and within convents the children left after plague and famine swept the land might be lovingly reared. Against plague, famine and ignorance, these were slender bulwarks indeed. Religion counselled resignation to the will of God, and tempered the bitterness and rebellion of those whose children died one by one in infancy, or remained the sole survivors of some plague. As compassion was the appropriate active Christian virtue for those who ministered to the unfortunate, so

resignation was the equally appropriate virtue in those who must bow their heads before a series of misfortunes which we would today account as preventable.

Meanwhile, both compassionate service and gentle resignation were reinforced by an other-worldliness which despised material things, even while distributing bread to the starving, or bathing the terrible sores on the feet of those who had no shoes in winter. This other-worldliness could survive even while using as good symbols those tools by which men gained their bread and journeyed over the seas to obtain new foods—the plough, the sickle, the ship—these were symbols which could be combined with the deepest religious devotion. Then came the machine, the substitution of fuel for men and women walking treadmills, the substitution of mechanical processes for the weariness of human hands. At first the machine seemed to be enslaving the human spirit rather than releasing it. As men and women entered the mines and factories, it seemed clear that the machine was Moloch devouring the souls and bodies of newly urbanized, lost, exploited human beings. The plough, the sickle, and the sail remained symbols of simple Christian goodness, of the yielding earth, of the good grain reaped in the fields, and of the traveller for whom one prayed, but the machine which was to increase the yield of the land and make the journeying traveller safe became identified with Mammon. The machine and all its works were evil—set against the vision of a New Jerusalem that might instead be built in England's green and pleasant lands. As the products of the machine grew, and men came to live in cities which became more identified with godlessness, materialism, industrialism, and urbanism became a trilogy of the works of the devil—an emphasis which was not lessened by the emphasis of Bolshevik propaganda upon godlessness coupled with the new deification of the machine.

So today we find ourselves in a parlous state. Since World War II the new technology, combined with the upsurge of aspiration and hope among all the



peoples of the world, means that we confront a possibility of preventing hunger and premature death, and of opening up the opportunities of literacy and experience, beyond the wildest dreams of only a few decades ago. We confront this prospect, not with the full vigor of religious dedication, but with divided hearts and minds, with a doubt whether anything born of the machine can be good, with a fear that it is materialistic to plan, to import tractors, or to set up assembly lines, to wear mass produced goods, buy paper books, or even—for some recently Christianized primitive peoples—to want shoes. A religious ethic attuned to compassion and resignation in a world of suffering and poverty is confused and stumbling in the face of a possible world where no one need go hungry, or die for want of a known remedy, or go ignorant and illiterate through life.

Communism and its adherents experience no such confusions. However much their methods may compromise their ends so that they are unattainable, they are clear in the congruence between health, education and welfare, on the one hand, and the Communist ethic on the other, and young Soviet delegates to international congresses are moved to genuine tears by stories of land reclamation in some valley of starving peasants. The full vigor of their belief that food and health education are the most worthwhile ideals to pursue, for themselves and for other men, can go out to meet the awakened hopes of the hungry, ignorant, disease-ridden peoples of the jungles and deserts of the undeveloped countries of the earth. Meanwhile, the minds of Christian missionaries abroad and Christian people at home are divided; in their insistence that men do not live by bread alone, they are unwilling to let their hearts be kindled by the possibility that all men may have bread. All too often the enthusiasts who are dedicating themselves to the cause of technical assistance, fighting for more appropriations, seeking to develop ways and means of harnessing the skills of part of the modern world to the service of the rest of the world, must work with only their own secular zeal to sustain them, without benefit or backing from the churches. "The mission told us the Truth, but they did not show us the way," say the awakening peoples of the Pacific Islands, rebelling against teaching which told them "the Truth about the beginning of the world," but did not "tell us how keep our babies from dying or our people from dying as young men."

The failure of the Christian churches to pick up this unprecedented hope for the peoples of the earth and to carry it as a sacred trust as part of their task of cherishing and protecting "the lives of men and the life of the world," is paralleled by another ethical dilemma—the desire to exploit technical assistance, to make feeding and teaching and curing people into a bribe, to keep the peoples of other

countries on our side against communism. Over and over again, one hears the argument that technical assistance is good policy, is the only way to hold back the march of communism. This is an appropriate argument in the mouths of those who believe that other men will do good deeds only for their own ends, and is of a piece with setting up school lunch programs, not to feed children, but to dispose of surplus agricultural products. Surely, holding back the tide of communism—or, put in religious terms, fighting the Devil—is a lesser good than cherishing God's children. How can we pause in a discussion of how, if we will, we can bring relief from hunger and pain and ignorance to millions, to suggest that it is also sound national policy. The invocation of this lesser good somehow dims and detracts from the shining purpose with which the vision of what can be done today should be able to infuse the imagination of contemporary Christians. Christ said, "Feed my lambs," and today there is the possibility of food enough to feed all of his lambs; he said, "Heal the sick," and with aureomycin and sulpha, malarial control, immunization and vaccines, "they can be healed." Instead of this vision of a Christian ethic of the brotherhood of man, which is realizable here on earth, now—we have "technical assistance as a useful adjunct of national policy," suitably combined in small proportions with bi-lateral agreements involving the instruments of warfare. This produces an ethical misalliance between defensive warfare—which can never be defined by religious people as anything but an evil which may nevertheless be absolutely necessary if the conditions which are necessary for religion are not to disappear from the earth—and sharing life and hope between the technically advanced and the technically unadvanced peoples of the world. When technical assistance is thus reduced, either to an instrument of anti-communism or to an instrument or purely national policy, it no longer can completely command the religious imaginations of men.

In discussions of Point Four, it is customary and relevant to point out that many of the issues involved are already familiar to Americans who have given willingly of their substance and their lives, to bring the Gospel, to bring medicine and education and food to the peoples of other countries. But they have not done this as Americans, but American Christians, as particular groups of Christians, Methodists, or members of the Society of Friends, Episcopalians or Baptists. Even in secular activities of sending food and clothing abroad, Americans have traditionally been extremely generous as individuals or members of voluntary organizations, but grudging and stipulating when it came to Congressional action for the same ends. European observers have

often been confused by the apparent paradox of Americans who, in response to an appeal for voluntary abstention from essential foods, responded so magnificently in World War I and who, in World War II, expressed continuous anxiety for fear we would "starve to death" if we tried to feed the world. Yet the difference is quite explicable. I remember discussing this with a high official abroad during the war, who said, "Anyway, you Americans are not going to export the food that is needed. You are going to eat it up yourselves." When I objected vigorously that the American people had shown over and over again their generosity, their willingness to give up butter and sugar that others might not starve, that, because in this war it was government planned, people had not understood the need, he said, "Go home, and find a religious leader who will be willing to make the people understand." But there was no such religious leader ready; the groups who tried to make Americans realize that a decision not to ration soap would be translated into nutritional deprivation for millions of children were led by left-wing groups with suspect motivations. The actual enormous contribution—which should still have been much greater—that the United States Government made to feeding the world was virtually without benefit of clergy, and loomed in the minds of the American people, not as too little—which they would have considered it had they acted privately and voluntarily, as Christians, rather than as Federal tax payers—but as too much.

Our ambivalence, as Americans, about the role of the Federal Government, at home and abroad, is a compound of our dislike of the Federal Government getting into habits of playing Santa Claus, and our dislike of anyone receiving hand-outs. The genius of the Point Four program was that it emphasized the role of Americans, acting through the Federal Government, in providing "know-how" rather than goods, in helping other peoples to help themselves. As such, there is much in the Point Four program which can catch the imagination and enlist the devotion of Americans—as Americans, and as Christians. If there were no other way in which technical assistance could be brought to Iran or Indonesia, then Point Four would represent one of our highest possible aspirations, perhaps exceeding in dramatic if not in real value, the activities of voluntary associations of Americans, because the United States Point Four program has to operate in a world where national states take on either the true aspects of the bellwether of the flock, or that of wolves in sheep's clothing.

But Point Four operations are not our best invention because we have already conceived and designed an even better way, and a way that is more congruent with the practice of the brotherhood of man.

In giving technical assistance today, and helping other peoples overcome starvation, ignorance, and preventable disease, we have the choice of acting bilaterally, as members of a single, very rich, very prosperous, generous, but necessarily self-interested (for it is the function of national governments to protect their own people against all others) nation state, or as members of an associated group of nations, in which we who wish to help, and they who need help, meet in an equality of interest and dignity. If Christian generosity and Christian giving are to be congruent with those democratic institutions which visions of the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God have done so much to foster, then any discrepancy between giver and receiver which can be wiped out, must be wiped out. Simple sharing, not lordly benefaction, ennobles both giver and receiver while the least extra, unnecessary, in a sense technological discrepancy, begrimes and demeans such sharing.

Within the framework of the United Nations Technical Assistance program, all the members—the United States, Venezuela, France, Indonesia, Norway, although some are larger and stronger, some highly developed technically, some beginners in the task of putting modern science at the service of their peoples—act on a basis of equality within an organization which is their own. When the government of Venezuela or Greece asks help from the United Nations Technical Assistance program, it is one member of a group of brothers asking help from their own group, not the poor asking the rich, or the weak the strong, or the unskilled the technically trained. The United Nations may have to recruit all of the technicians from the highly developed countries, but within international tear-frameworks these men will work—in dignified guaranteed equal status—with the representatives of the countries who have asked for assistance. As the richest country, the United States may foot the largest bill, not as a single benefactor of the mendicant peoples but as one among the peoples of the world.

Point Four, if stated as a way in which we, the fortunate, may help those less fortunate, has high ethical appeal in focussing the moral energy of Americans, as citizens, on the responsibility of the United States in the modern world. But, as Kipling emphasized long ago in his much misunderstood poem, "The White Man's Burden," the task of the more technically developed country—the country whose technology, or religion, or political institutions bear the marks of generations of high level concerted felicitous effort—is to make the recipients of help not into sycophants or dependents, but into peers. Within the framework of the United Nations, all member peoples are peers, and it is the stated aim that the peoples of Trust Territories be helped to

become full self-governing peoples also. Here there need be no confusion between Christian sharing and more limited national interest, no puffed up pride of superior nation status. The people of any nation who proclaim themselves Christian have a role in regard to other nations in which no incompatible or partial aim need confuse the full involvement of their religious dedication.

But—even granted the partial suitability of Point Four, the more complete suitability of United Nations Technical Assistance progress as the structural expression of the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God, where no brother should set himself up above another—we are still in difficulty. We still have with us Christian ambivalence about the fruits of the machine, Christians' willingness to brand (as I have heard it branded by men in holy orders) the desire of mothers that their babies should not die, as "materialism," Christians' willingness to denounce the machine—which as the successor of plough, sickle and mortar, has made it possible for men to live more worthily of their humanity—as the enemy of spirituality. Under an elaborate superstructure which sometimes also draws help from the specious argument that people's cultures should be respected—an argument which got short enough shrift when it was a matter of giving other people the full details of our culture-laden religious ideas—too many Christians have drawn aside their skirts from the "materialism" of a pro-

gram that will teach the hungry how to feed themselves, continuing to support the Christian virtues of compassion and resignation, appropriate to the inevitable sufferings of man, in a context of the mid-twentieth century, in which hunger and ignorance and epidemic disease are no longer inevitable, but definitely, immediately preventable.

The religiously gifted know, centuries early, what men pray for for other men, and in conclusion I should like to quote from an old Elizabethan prayer:

They that are snared and entangled in the utter lack of things needful for the body cannot set their minds upon Thee as they ought to do; but when they are deprived of the things which they so greatly desire, their hearts are cast down and quail for grief. Have pity upon them, therefore, most merciful Father, and relieve their misery through Thy incredible riches, that, removing their urgent necessity, they may rise up to Thee in mind.

Thou, O Lord, providest enough for all men with Thy most bountiful hand. . . . Give meat to the hungry and drink to the thirsty; comfort the sorrowful, cheer the dismayed and strengthen the weak; deliver the oppressed and give hope and courage to them that are out of heart.

Have mercy, O Lord, upon all forestallers, and upon all them that seek undue profits or unlawful gains. Turn Thou the hearts of them that live by cunning rather than by labour. Teach us that we stand daily and wholly in need of one another. And give us grace, in hand and mind, to add our proper share to the common stock; through Jesus Christ our Lord.\*

## World Church: News and Notes

### Dean James Pike Criticizes Official Piety

(Excerpts of sermon preached in New York Cathedral on December 26, 1954, St. Stephen's Day.)

"There is a great increase these days in official piety: 'under God' has been added to the pledge of allegiance to the flag; statements about 'spiritual values' by public officials are more frequent; we have added a religious postage stamp. Congress has voted to establish a 'prayer room' in the Capitol.

"But all of this may actually hurt the true Christian cause if along with this large-scale public endorsement of religion there is not an evident effect on the way our nation exercises its world responsibilities on issues of Christian morality.

"The depth of our nation's Christian commitment received little proof in the vote, a couple of weeks ago, in the United Nations General Assembly on the question of apartheid in South Africa. The resolution before the Assembly sought to reaffirm the evils of racial persecution, to ask the Government of the Union of South Africa to reconsider its position and to continue the

UN Commission for keeping under review the problem of race conflict—which not only violates human rights affirmed by the UN Charter, but threatens the peace of the world by inviting Communistic infiltration and/or terrorism a la Mau Mau. Fortunately, the resolution was passed by the required two-thirds majority, but let us look at the vote. The Christian principles at stake were defended by votes of the Communistic countries and of the Moslem countries, while not one leading Christian country was found to support the resolution. Our nation in the votes on the several propositions of the resolution vacillated between voting *against* and *abstaining*. What a great witness this Christmastide to the meaning of Christianity! We leave it to aesthetic materialists and to Moslems to sustain the Christian principle of the equality of all men regardless of race or color, whereas we—with all our burgeoning religiosity—do all we can to impede the proclamation of this principle, presumably because of some short-range advantage in our diplomatic relations with the Union of South Africa!

"This is why, in the face of facts like this, our increasing conspicuous confessions of piety have, I am sure, an unconvincing sound in a world which so much needs for its salvation the true religion of Christian sacrifice and of the conquest of evil."

\* Quoted in The Commemoration Sermon, delivered by the economist, Mr. C. W. Guillebaud, May 9, 1953, and published in *The Eagle*, St. John's College, Cambridge, Vol. LV, No. 243, September, 1953.



### **Worker-Priests Meet on New Lyon Mission**

Lyon, France (RNS)—Formation of a new Roman Catholic mission to the working classes here prompted a meeting of 17 worker-priests who had defied the French hierarchy's recall order earlier this year.

The priests, all from the Lyon and St. Etienne area, met at Villeurbanne to decide how the mission might affect their own future actions. They did not disclose what went on at the session. The 17 have continued to hold their factory jobs despite the hierarchy's pronouncement limiting the worker-priests to three hours of secular employment a day and otherwise curtailing their activities.

Like the new Paris mission to working classes, the Prado community formed here is an experiment. It is composed of five members, including Auxiliary Bishop Alfred Ancel of Lyon, two priests and two lay brothers. Bishop Ancel is well known for his sympathy with workers' problems. Members of the new community will earn their living while carrying out their mission. The lay brothers will hold full-time factory jobs. The priests will limit their secular work to the three hours daily permitted by the hierarchy's edict. Bishop Ancel has found part-time clerical work that he can do in the community's living quarters.

In announcing the start of the Lyon experiment, Pierre Cardinal Gerlier, Archbishop of Lyon, said it had the approval of Pope Pius XII. Cardinal Gerlier stressed that the mission was not a revival of the priest-worker movement, the curtailment of which was initiated by the Vatican. He said the community would remain under the control of diocesan authorities and would conform to the stipulations laid down by Pope Pius and incorporated in the hierarchy's edict on worker-priests. The community will work closely with parish clergymen and with the local section of Workers Catholic Action.

### **Protestants Studying Papal Statement**

New York (The Religious Newsweekly)—An extensive study of the implications of the recent statement of Pope Pius XII that the authority of the Roman Catholic Church is not limited to purely religious matters is being made by Protestant and Orthodox Church leaders in this country.

Dr. Claud Nelson, executive director of the Department of Religious Liberty of the National Council of Churches, said last week that many Protestants share the conviction expressed by the Vatican as to Christian rights and responsibilities in the political realm, but would be seriously concerned with the way in which they are exercised, and particularly with the role of church authorities.

Pope Pius discussed the church's jurisdiction in temporal realms at a special audience to 900 prelates and theologians assembled in Rome. He declared that all of natural law, "its foundation, its interpretation and its application, so far as moral aspects extend" are within the sphere of the church.

Important differences are apparent, said Dr. Nelson, between positions taken by Protestant churches and those indicated in the Pope's address. "Among those

readily observable," he said, "are the direct responsibility of the individual believer as affirmed by Protestants, different means and degrees of exercising social and political influence, and ideas concerning the nature and responsibility of the state as a secular institution. Clarification of these and other differences waits not only on further study but on observation of the specific effect given in practice to Pope Pius' declaration of principles."

Dr. Nelson said the papal pronouncement also will be studied with regard to areas of thought and action in which parallel efforts by Protestants and Roman Catholics may be pursued.

He emphasized that reactions are only tentative pending further clarification. The text of the Pope's statement, he said, will be sent by the National Council to representatives of its thirty-member communions in the United States.

### **Johannesburg Bishop Orders Closing of Mission Schools**

Johannesburg, So. Africa (RNS)—Dr. Richard Ambrose Reeves, Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg, has ordered all of the church's 23 mission schools in Southern Transvaal closed down by next April 1. The schools serve some 10,000 Negro pupils.

The action was taken, he said, because under the new Bantu Education Act the schools could be kept open after that date only if they relegated the students "to a status of permanent inferiority."

"The decision to close the schools rather than cooperate with the government in the terms of the law is dictated by conscience," Bishop Reeves said. "No education at all is better than the wrong kind of education."

Dr. Cecil William Alderson, Bishop of Bloemfontein, Orange Free State, underscored Dr. Reeves' stand by saying that the government's attempt, through the Bantu Act, to deny individuals the right of full development was "close to the philosophy of communism."

The Synod of the Johannesburg Anglican Diocese recently condemned the education law and the Native Resettlement Act as dual evidences of the South African government's determination to impose its basic apartheid (segregation) policies on the country.

Similar action was taken by the Methodist Church of South Africa, the Baptist Union of South Africa and the South African Baptist Missionary Society.

The statements agreed in describing apartheid as "contrary to the will of God" and "in conflict with Christian standards."

Earlier, the Roman Catholic bishops of the country attacked the Bantu Education Act.

### **Church Refuses to Sign Loyalty Oath**

The First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles will receive a grant of \$1,000 from the Bill of Rights Fund, which was recently organized to defend civil liberties in the United States.

The money grant is to assist the church's legal battle against the California Levering Act requiring a loyalty oath from religious, educational and charitable institutions as a condition for their tax exemption. The First

# Christianity and Crisis

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Unitarian Church is one of a number of religious organizations that is refusing to sign the oath on the grounds that it violates the First Amendment's provision establishing separation between church and state.

Present plans are for the First Unitarian Church to pay the tax to the State of California and later sue to recover. The church is trying to raise \$10,000 to fight the loyalty oath, which it terms "an attempt by the state to control the conscience of the church."

## Correspondence

To the Editors:

Dr. Walter Van Kirk's letter (Dec. 27) about my critique of the Evanston Report on International Affairs (Nov. 29) raises some points I should like to clarify.

We Protestants are not fond of infallible pronouncements. The six Section Reports from Evanston are tentative documents, designed to provide guidance and to stimulate debate looking toward a more effective Christian witness. Because I honor the significance of ecumenical statements and am aware of the great difficulties in producing them, I wrote as I did. In no sense was I critical of the Section IV Report for not achieving greater consensus. A case could be made that it produced more consensus on paper than the facts would warrant.

In attempting to make a constructive contribution to the ecumenical dialogue in international affairs I tried

to emphasize one central point—the relevance and effectiveness of ecumenical statements depend less on their "consensus" than on the extent to which they have been instructed by the Biblical understanding of God's action in history and by an adequate understanding of those aspects of the human situation to which they are addressed. Using this standard, I attempted to indicate significant points where the Report failed to measure up. I concur with those Evanston observers who believe that the high degree of relevance attained by the Reports on Race and the Responsible Society was related directly to the acceptance by the drafters of the established insights of specialists in those areas.

It is precisely because the problems of world politics are more complex and baffling than those of race and economics that ecumenical deliberations on international affairs would benefit greatly by the fullest possible use of political scientists, historians, theologians and other experts. The role of experts is not to tell a representative group what to think, but to provide conceptual tools of fact and theory which will enable the representatives to express with greater clarity and accuracy what they really do believe. I was not calling for "perfection" in ecumenical statements, as Dr. Van Kirk suggests, but rather for more adequate tools for expressing our imperfection. It may be in passing that we Protestants tend to accept the advice of experts in fields like medicine and public relations and tend to reject it or ignore it in the social sciences. I assume that all experts are human and therefore fallible, but I also assume that the expert knows a great deal more than the layman.

The Editors of *Christianity and Crisis* asked me to write a critique of the report, not a summary of it or an "interpretation of what happened at Evanston." The Report as a whole was too much to treat in three pages, so I decided to "examine the main thrust of the report by noting its answers to three questions." I was "concerned mainly with its unstated and perhaps unexamined theological and political assumptions."

With this limited objective I tried honestly to discover the assumptions which lay behind the more specific affirmations and proposals of the report. The job was difficult because some of the general theological affirmations seemed to be denied, or seriously modified, by specific statements. I sought to ascertain the major thrust of the report and to evaluate the position taken from a theological perspective corresponding to that of the Evanston Report on the Main Theme and from what I believe is the prevailing understanding of the nature of world politics among Western historians, political scientists and statesmen. If I have misrepresented either "my perspective" or the report I would welcome correction.

Sincerely yours,

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## Author In This Issue

Dr. Margaret Mead is Associate Curator of Ethnology at the American Museum of Natural History and is Adjunct Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University. An outstanding anthropologist, she is perhaps best known for her book, *Coming of Age in Samoa*.

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